



It is always safe to cry out against "insidious propaganda"

Froggie in the Meadow

HOW editors love to play "froggie in the meadow" with their betters and "to take a little stick and stir him all about" when the opportunity comes! Recently President Ernest M. Hopkins of Dartmouth gave them the opportunity. He spoke in his opening address of "the aristocracy of brains" and declaimed against "propaganda." Naturally, the editors began asking what is brains and what is propaganda, and when these questions are raised it becomes evident quickly that the president of Dartmouth was using phrases as loosely as Bryan ever did.

Yet President Hopkins had an idea. What he seems to have meant when he talked about the American colleges promoting an "aristocracy of brains" was that our present college plants are restricted in their capacity for production and that there should be some limitation upon the material which they shall try to turn out as college men and women. He was clearly seeking some rule by which to limit the students who should go to our colleges. And he seemed to think that the presence or absence of what he chose to call "brains" would make a measure by which to try applicants.

But no one knows what brains are. A college entrance examination will not reveal them. High grades in college are not infallible tests for brains. It is easy to show that the honor men of a given class in any college generally do well in life. But until a record is made of what the men in the same class did who barely squeaked through, the story of the honor men proves nothing. And the colleges have no statistical records of the gay lads who got their education from the college life.

Brains should mean certain high capacities to know things, to correlate them, so to form wise judgments and to act in accordance with them. In other words, to produce God's perfect child. There is no such creature. In the meter of life force of will counts for much in certain kinds of success; persuasive power produces another kind of success, and a person with too much or too little thyroid may live well and be the envy of his neighbors as a giant or a dwarf with no brains, no will power, no winning ways and no accumulated capital whatever. The world is no safer for President Hopkins' "brains" than it is for President Wilson's "democracy."

And as for "propaganda," there is another juggler's word. It is always safe to denounce propaganda. Every one is against it. For it is the thing which no one believes in. Indeed, anything which any one disbelieves is to that man propaganda, and that is all propaganda is. The church is a center of propaganda to the unbeliever. The endowed college is a disseminator of propaganda to the social rebel. The literature of revolt is propaganda to the coupon clipper. The staid press associations spread what the Socialist regard as propaganda, and the labor press is nothing but propaganda to the Chamber of Commerce. Moreover, it is always "insidious propaganda." "Insidious propaganda" is a phrase as pot and inescapable as "the unspeakable Turk." And it is always as safe for a man to cry out against "insidious propaganda" as it is to abuse the Rum Fiend in a prohibition state.

Loose phraseology is the prerogative of the newspaper man, who has to write hurriedly and so often thinks casually. But when we catch a college president at one of our own tricks, how we do like to tease him. President Hopkins gave the editorial writers a merry quarter of an hour when he talked about the "aristocracy of brains" and "the dangers of propaganda." And what was fun for the boys should not have been so very bad for the frog. Perhaps he, too, enjoyed it.

The President

A YEAR and a half, crowded with big events, has passed since President Harding went to the White House. It is fair now to measure him, and many newspaper men are doing so. It is unlikely that any other event will rise in his official life that will develop any new trait, nor is it probable that any characteristic will be strengthened by the two years before him in the White House. What he has shown us he will continue to be to the end.

So let us look at him as the times have revealed him. First of all, we find a kindly man. He is dignified but always gentle. He

has no sense of his own importance that makes him gruff or mean or intriguing. He is not a face-saver. He clearly has no lust for leadership nor desire for power. His place in history doesn't bother him. For books do not interest him. Books and book men are not in his cosmos. The writer whom President Roosevelt called to great power from his garret and whom President Wilson kept around the White House like the "organ in the parlor, to give the place tone," President Harding has ignored. Indeed, President Harding has packed up the writer's books and chased him off the place.

So the writer has naturally felt that the plutocrat has replaced the writer in the White House. The writer's inference is unfair. Plutocracy may have a better chance in the White House with the writer back in his attic, but not because the President consciously agrees with the Plutocrat. Harding is not a tool of Wall Street. Wall Street has little standing in the President's cosmos; and this is true despite the mistakes of Secretary Fall, the nonsense uttered by Secretary Weeks and the outrageous conduct of Attorney General Daugherty. The President is a country town man, with the country town's distrust of Wall Street mingled strongly with his respect for it.

He let the coal miners win their strike, and when the railroad strikers had lost their strike the Administration foolishly gave it a most unnecessary kick with the Daugherty injunction. But Harding's fair proposals—rejected at different times by both sides—indicates the fairness of his mind.

So we may say that, like most men who are essentially gentle, he is also fair as he may be. The reason why he is not fairer than he is comes not for lack of courage, but comes because he doesn't know how to be fairer than he is. A lack of information, a limited background in his experience, is his most obvious drawback. Roosevelt and Wilson knew the books where they could find truth. They were scholars who had read of the problems before them and had associated with well-read men. President Harding has made his living as a publisher, rather than as an editor. His concerns were politics as it affected circulation and advertising rather than fundamental policies as they affected the life about him. He had followed his party. He had cared little for platforms and much for victories. Hence the abstractions that make big issues new to him. He senses out much, and when he is sure he moves bravely. But he is too often unsure.

His courage is never blustering, never cruel, never self-seeking. But his courage never fails him. His veto of the bonus took grit. His advocacy of the ship subsidy took something of the same quality. One was popular in many quarters, the other was popular in but a few. But popularity does not gauge the quality of the President's nerve. It also is gentle, dignified, persuasive rather than aggressive, but always steady.

So there he stands, our ruler for two years and five months more. We need expect no new man to emerge. He is what he is and will be a gentle, sincere, fair-minded man with courage and without pretense. He is not given to intrigue. No one accuses him of lying. He is not sophisticated, and because he is kind he is never rude. He has no hobbies, is not hampered by convictions about public matters, goes at a day's work with a desire to do it well and let it go at that. He is no Caesar, but neither is he a Cassius nor a Brutus. And



"AS I SEE IT"

By WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

Cartoons by

Albert Levering



a dazed and puzzled era may need just such a mild, fair, brave gentleman as the gods have given to us.

"Babbitt"

SINCLAIR LEWIS, who wrote "Main Street" two years ago, put a new phrase into the English language. "Main Street" means something now that it did not mean before. Soon the word "Babbitt" will be coined into a new meaning. For Mr. Lewis's new book, "Babbitt," is a better, bigger book than "Main Street" and should have more readers. Babbitt, the hero of the book, lives in one of our second-grade towns, of, say, three or four

thousand people. He is a "realtor," a prominent citizen, a Rotarian and Elk, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, a "booster," a family man, who sneaks down the primrose path several times and doesn't care for it, a Presbyterian, a Sunday school promoter and, in all, a restless, aspiring, discontented man who tries to find pleasure in noise and happiness in jumping about. Our urban life, whether in Toledo or Denver, Minneapolis or Buffalo, Sauk Center or New York, is jammed full of Babbitts. Babbitt is Main Street in tailored clothes. And the story of Babbitt is a story that every American should read—a great philippic against the emptiness of this civilization.

truth about our time, big universal facts as true on the Avenue Victor Hugo or Wilhelmstrasse or Piccadilly Circus as they are of American life. Doubtless the Jews of Judea hated Jeremiah. But it was Jeremiah or a heathen conquest. He saved the Jews. Sinclair Lewis is one of the major prophets of our times, a Jeremiah probably, but heaven sent. If we heed his lamentation we are saved. If we ignore it we are gone.

Lewis's "Babbitt" is a better piece of work than "Main Street." But it has the same theme. It is an awful sermon on the text "What profiteth it a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Babbitt is groping through a sordid wilderness of substantial things—luxuries, pomps, honors, fastness—to find his lost soul. His home, as we have made homes, fails him. His business, as we make business, fails. The love of woman stales. Religion is as gross as his business and his mistress. And the tragedy of the agonized, stunted spirit searching pitifully for the image of its Maker is a story that should make man, clattering futilely among the machinery of civilization, stop, look and listen before proceeding upon his weary, useless way.

"Babbitt," like "Main Street," contains many facts of life. But enough facts are out of the picture to keep it from being the whole truth. Nobility is wanting among the men and women of the Sinclair Lewis stories. The lack of nobility latent in every heart is smothered by the way of life that we are encouraging in the world we are making. And if Mr. Lewis leaves nobility out of his stories we must remember that we are crushing nobility out of our lives. Babbitt would be noble if he could. But life penned him up, and in his cage he paces like a wild thing, typical of humanity in our modern world, dreaming fatuously of a freedom that he can never know.

Sinclair Lewis in the two books "Main Street" and "Babbitt" has set his feet upon solid ground. He has served humanity a great turn. He is one of the strong, modern voices crying out against a wicked and perverse generation. Students of our times in other eras must go to Lewis and his fellow protesters to understand what ailed us. "Zenith" is the name of the city where Babbitt lives. History will call it and all its kind "Nadir" in the epoch that followed the World War. Lewis is the prophet of "Nadir." It will do no good to stone the prophet. It is better for us to repent and be saved.

The Stars in Their Courses

GRADUALLY prohibition has tightened its grip upon the land. The new tariff law permits search and seizure of baggage and vehicles at all borders. And in Canada the railroads are about to refuse consignments of wet goods to America, except where there are custom houses. On top of this the dries, who still control Congress, have announced that they will demand a dry law for all American ships as a price for supporting the President's ship subsidy bill. Every day the law stands on the statute books is a gain. The saloon created appetites. The bootlegger merely satisfies them. And every day the



The Congressional Kite and its weighty tail of American Soviets

saloon is out of business some customer of the bootlegger either dies or swears off. The stars in their courses are against the wet. They might just as well take one long, last lingering swig of wood alcohol and forget their troubles, or just forget them by thinking of something else. There is no more show for legalized light wines and beers than for a legalization of the lighter degrees of manslaughter.

Congress

THE session of Congress that has just closed wasn't so bad. It might have been a lot worse. It seems to have cut down our Federal taxes a few hundred millions, perhaps nearly, or more than, a billion dollars. And it appears to have passed some rather obnoxious tariff schedules and then to have given the President the power to change them. Congress also took off a lot of nuisance taxes and slipped on a number of income brackets to replace the nuisances. Laws were passed to investigate the coal business and to make it easier for the sick soldier. Nothing seriously bad was done. Along with a lot of side-stepping, no really backward step was taken, although the Congress was controlled by reactionaries who were eager to go back to Mari Hanna's day. Considering everything, what we reasonably feared and what we partially got, Congress was not the affliction that it might have been if public opinion had not held it in check. A Democratic Congress might have done worse, but not much worse. For public opinion would have operated there as it has operated on this Congress.

The truth is that this is a government of opinion. Campaign claptrap, platform promises and programs, party tradition and party leaders make no very great difference in the bills that come out of the Congressional hopper. The folks get what they want. It is a mystery how. But they do. The American Constitution makes no provision for responsible government. But public opinion, operating heaven only knows how, gets responsible government.

And so we shuffle along. One Congress is like all Congresses. We seem to have standardized even the ways of Providence.

Edging In on Us

THE League of Women Voters quietly put a bill through Congress toward the close of the session the other day which slices off another bit of the prerogatives of the American male. Hereafter an American man cannot endow a foreign woman with American citizenship by marrying her, nor does an American woman lose her American citizenship by marrying a foreigner. The League of Women Voters is one of the major branches of the extraconstitutional soviet government that really rules America. It is wisely controlled and powerfully backed by the American women. It is responsible for the Shepherds-Towner maternity bill, which is now operating to give American mothers advice before and after children are born and to give them hospital service when the babies come. The League of Women Voters is stronger than its soviet associate, the Republican National Committee, and in this session where the soviet soviet representative, the American Legion, failed, the women's representative has won every fight. It is odd that we rail so loudly against Soviet government in Russia, when we maintain it unassailed here in America. Every craft, calling, cult and class keeps its soviet representation in Washington, the Bankers' Association, the Farmers' Union, the American Medical Society, the Federation of Labor, the Anti-Saloon League, the women, the soldiers, Wall Street and the pacifists. And Congress is maintained by our government as the humble and willing instrument through which these various soviets do their will. Some one should write a school treatise on civil government which will tell the children the truth about government. Why should we put in so much time studying the Constitution when it is so little used in the actual control of political affairs?

In the mean time, to go back to the excellent and powerful League of Women Voters and its recent achievement, which was thoroughly commendable, why should not men get up some sort of League of He Voters to join the Washington soviet and watch the women to see that with all their power they don't put something over on us? For they surely are edging along.

GOTHAM ARABIAN NIGHTS

Tale of the Mighty Sheik ul Islam and How His Forces Went Forth to Battle

By FREDERIC F. VAN de WATER

ALLAHO AKHBARI! Allaho akhbari! Bright, O ye of the faith, is the blade of Damascus, and it thirsteth for the blood of the foes of Islam. Valiant are the hearts of those who follow the green banner of the Prophet when it moveth forward to war. Horsemen and footmen, mamlukes and janissaries, filled with a thirsting for high deeds of valor, seek the white bosoms of the hours of paradise and find them where the conflict rageth fiercest.

Beat upon the tambor and shrill upon the fife, for this, O offends all, is a tale of war and carnage, even the tale of the mighty Sheik ul Islam, Willibald Hearst, and how the forces gathered beneath his standard by Connors Bey went forth to battle. Their number was like unto the stars in the heavens—according to Connors Bey. And the ballots that they wielded for the glory of the Sheik ul Islam were like unto the sand grains of the sea for multitude—likewise according to Connors Bey.

For it came to pass that ere the idea of November, when the moon of the Sultan Nathan's administration was to wane and disappear, the men of Haroun Al Smith and the forces of Willibald Hearst strove on the battlefields of Al-Bany and Erie. For the men of the Sheik ul Islam cried aloud that Willibald alone should succeed the Sultan Nathan as ruler of the land. And the cohorts of Haroun Al Smith likewise shouted that their leader alone should prevail. And neither side accomplishing anything by shouting, they fell upon each other with the ballot, and great was the carnage.

Now on the morning ere the fray began came Connors Bey to the palace of Willibald Hearst and, entering the presence of his lord, proclaimed: "Victory, great warrior, victory is ours!"

And Willibald, lifting his head from the latest letter addressed to him by the good Caliph Hy-lan of the Ruddy Countenance, spake gladly, saying:

"And is it then over, Connors Bey, and have we triumphed as thou hast long predicted?"

To which Connors Bey replied: "Nay, son of Saladin, the conflict even now beginneth. Yet is it a mere formality. Thou standest to-day practically elected and ere night fall the forces of Haroun Al Smith, whose name be ever accursed, shall be food for the vultures and jackals and the lands of Al-Bany and Erie shall be conquered in thy name."

And Willibald cast his eyes heavenward and sighed, saying:

"I have not sought the nomination. The idea thereof is repugnant to me. Yet, let the voice of the people rule!"

Then Connors Bey asked: "Wilt thou don helm and hauberk, O thou scimitar-souled, and go forth and lead thy forces in battle?"

But the Sheik ul Islam replied: "Nay, rather I shall remain here in my palace, for it is in my mind that the right hath a greater chance of prevailing in my absence. But go thou, good Connors Bey, into the minaret of my palace and wait there and cry aloud to me when thou seest the couriers of victory returning."

And it was as the Sheik ul Islam directed, and Connors Bey climbed to the minaret and watched the highway winding down from Erie and Al-Bany, where the forces of Willibald and Haroun Al Smith met in the shock of war.

Now in the land of Al-Bany the forces of Haroun stood long under arms, their ballots whetted for the fray, and at length they chose certain of their number, saying:

"Go forth and find at once the host that Connors Bey hath banded he would bring up against us, for it seemeth that somehow or other they have forgotten the date."

And in the land of Erie, even the home of the great Connors Bey, the hosts of Haroun Al Smith marched forth to war, and when the conflict was over spake each man to his fellow:

"It wasn't worth all that marching."

Now, about the time of the second call to prayer Willibald Hearst rose from his divan and cried up the winding staircase to Connors Bey in his minaret:

"Connors Bey! Connors Bey! Dost thou see any one coming?"

And Connors Bey gave answer:

"Oh, great sheik, I see a dust approaching, but I know not who it is who cometh. Perchance it is the messenger of victory that we look for."

And the courier drew nigh and thundered upon the postern and was admitted to the presence of Willibald Hearst, who thrust his right hand into his bosom and, inflating the latter, quoth:

"I have not sought the nomination, but let the voice of the people rule. Speak, O messenger! How fared the battle?"

But the messenger salaamed and spake, saying: "Of battle I know naught. I bear to thee, O great Sheik, a letter from the good Caliph Hy-lan, proclaiming that thou art filled with the milk of human kindness and urging thee to become Sultan of this realm. Behold! here is the letter, serial No. F-11374."

And he delivered the missive, and, looking upon the face of Willibald Hearst, departed in haste.

Now, ere the third call to prayer, the Sheik ul Islam cried aloud to Connors Bey, saying:

"Connors Bey! Connors Bey! Dost thou see any one coming?"

And Connors Bey responded:

"Pardon, Cousin of Righteousness. I was just totaling up thy probable majorities. Wait till I give a look."

And he looked and cried, "Ay, one cometh, riding fast, and from his appearance he hath fought well in the bitter conflict."

Then thundered the courier across the drawbridge and beneath the portcullis, and cried with a weak voice: "I bring tidings to the Sheik ul Islam from the battle field of Al-Bany!"

And ushered into the presence of the

